



# Welcome to Metra's Strategic Plan Open House

## What is a strategic plan?

The Metra Strategic Plan is an action-oriented document that will guide agency decision making for years to come. The plan will include clear statements of Metra's mission and vision, which are used to identify a set of goals, objectives, and capital projects the agency will pursue over the next five years.

## Why is Metra doing this?

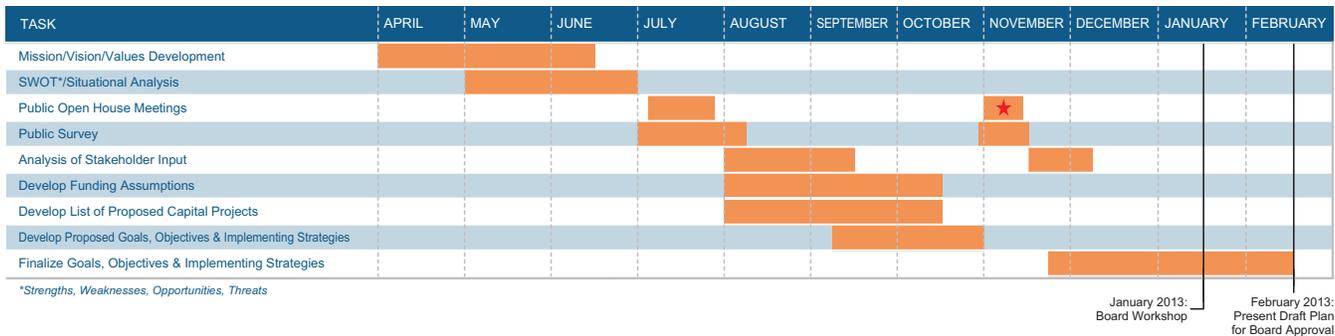
The Strategic Plan will give us focus and direction as we seek to use our scarce capital dollars in the most efficient and effective way possible. It is critical that Metra's spending decisions are made in a logical, consistent and equitable manner that complies with the agency's mission, vision and values.

## What is the process?

Metra's strategic planning process began this spring, with development of draft Mission and Vision Statements. During a round of open house meetings held in July, attendees completed surveys to provide feedback on our draft Mission and Vision Statements, agency goals, and capital projects that Metra should pursue. This survey was also available on Metra's website.

Since then, we have been analyzing the survey responses and other input we received, and incorporating that feedback into final Mission and Vision Statements, and compiling a list of potential capital projects. Stakeholder feedback has also informed the set of proposed agency goals, initiatives, strategies, and capital projects we are presenting today. During this second round of open houses, we are updating stakeholders on our progress and again asking for your input.

Our goal is to complete the initial version of the strategic plan in early 2013, but we will not reach this goal without the thoughtful contribution of as many stakeholders as possible. We will continue to have information about this project available on [metrarail.com/strategicplan](http://metrarail.com/strategicplan).



# First-Round Outreach Feedback

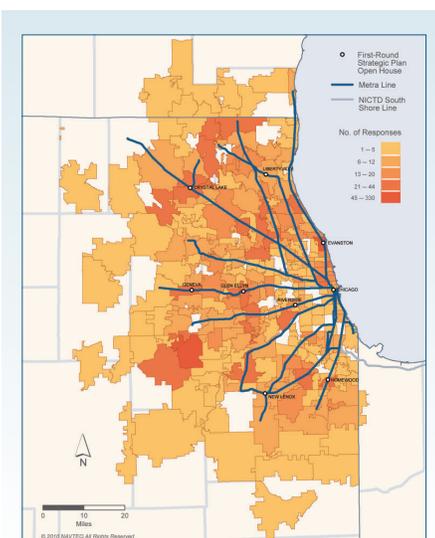
To engage as many stakeholders as possible and ensure that feedback reflected a diverse range of perspectives, Metra held nine open houses this July across the six-county service area. At these meetings, over **200** attendees spoke with Metra staff about their experiences with the system, the strategic planning process, and challenges faced by the agency. These attendees completed a survey about Metra's draft mission, vision, and goals, as well as initiatives and capital projects that should be prioritized in the plan. An online version of this survey attracted over **3,300** participants. Comment letters were submitted by numerous municipal and county governments, legislators and stakeholder groups.

To build awareness of Metra's strategic planning process and encourage participation, the open houses and online survey were publicized via:

- Station signage
- On the Bi-Level rider newsletter
- Coverage in news outlets throughout Metra's service area
- Invitation letters and emails to municipal and county governments, legislators and stakeholder groups (many of whom publicized the open houses and survey to their constituents)
- Metra's website, Twitter, and e-mail messages to Metra's participation panel



## Survey Results by Zip Code



## Agreement with Mission/Vision

### MISSION Statement

Agreement Rating	Open House Dot Exercise	Online Survey
	4.2	3.9

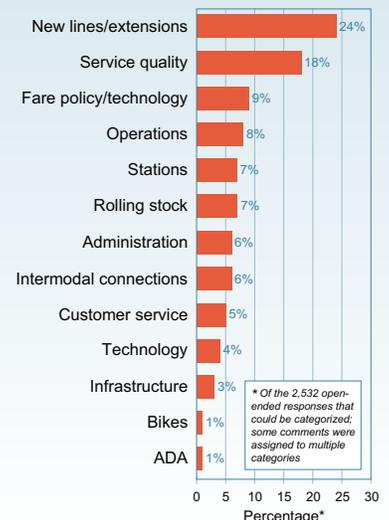
### VISION Statement

Element	Open House Dot Exercise*	Online Survey
Safe	15%	4.3
Reliable	18%	4.2
Efficient	14%	4.1
Sustaining infrastructure	21%	4.1
Economic vitality	17%	3.9
Transparency	5%	3.9
Technology and innovation	5%	3.9
Continuous improvement	5%	3.8

1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

\* Percentage of dot stickers assigned to each category

## Open-Ended Feedback Categories



## Mission and Vision Statements

A **MISSION STATEMENT** describes the overall purpose of the organization (who we are and what we do, who do we do it for, and how and why we do it) and serves as the starting point in developing a strategic vision. Following stakeholder input, Metra's Mission Statement has been revised as follows:

### *Metra Mission Statement*

*As part of a regional transportation network, Metra provides safe, reliable, efficient commuter rail service that enhances the economic and environmental health of Northeast Illinois.*

A **VISION STATEMENT** describes an ideal future (where are we going, what we are working toward becoming) and describes what impact the agency has on society. Since all components of the proposed Vision were generally supported by stakeholders, Metra's Vision was not revised.

### *Metra Vision Statement*

*To be a world-class commuter rail agency linking communities throughout the region by*

- *Providing the safest, most efficient, and most reliable service to our customers*
- *Sustaining our infrastructure for future generations*
- *Leading the industry in achieving continuous improvement, innovation and transparency*
- *Facilitating economic vitality throughout Northeast Illinois*

## Goals

A series of proposed goals, objectives, and implementing strategies were crafted to direct Metra's efforts over the next five years. Each element reflects the Mission and Vision Statements and is based on needs and concerns expressed by the public, Metra's customers and stakeholders, staff, and Board members. These goals, objectives, and implementing strategies were designed to capitalize on both internal and external opportunities. We believe that the achievement of these goals is possible within five years, but the effort will be challenging, and require growth and innovative thinking across the agency.

- *Provide a High-Quality Travel Experience for Our Customers*
- *Communicate Effectively With Customers and Stakeholders*
- *Maintain Customer Security and Emergency Preparedness*
- *Ensure Financial Stability*
- *Achieve State of Good Repair*
- *Strengthen Ties with the Regional Transportation Network and the Communities Metra Serves*
- *Attract and Maintain a Quality Workforce*
- *Improve Agency-wide Efficiency*
- *Implement System Expansion to Meet Transportation Needs as Resources Allow*
- *Support Agency and Regional Sustainability*



Note that these goals are not necessarily listed in order of importance or priority.



## PROVIDE A HIGH-QUALITY TRAVEL EXPERIENCE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

*Safety, reliability, and comfort are necessary components of the high-quality service Metra strives to provide. Improvements to vehicles, stations, and system infrastructure will increase our customers' satisfaction with their travel experience, building loyalty among existing riders and attracting new ones.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Improve safety	Prevent major incidents
	Implement Positive Train Control (PTC) by federally mandated deadline
	Continue safety outreach (including calendar contest, RailSafe, and Operation Lifesaver activities)
Improve reliability	Maintain existing infrastructure
	Achieve system-wide On-Time Performance of 95% or higher
	Ensure that at least 50% of all delays are between 6 and 10 minutes in duration
Improve comfort	Improve station amenities in previously identified station bond program
	Rehabilitate at least 40 rail cars to provide increased amenities (including electrical outlets)
	Install Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) on all cab cars and even-numbered Highliners
	Develop vehicle loading standard and utilize standard to guide train schedule updates and vehicle distribution
Increase ridership	Implement improved coach cleaning program
	Increase utilization of existing service through marketing and evaluation of pricing options to utilize available capacity
	Develop operations policies in the following areas: reverse commute, express trip / limited stop service
	Add rolling stock, yard capacity and infrastructure to support ridership growth

## COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

*Metra will strengthen and broaden our communications efforts to increase the dialogue between Metra and the public we serve. We will deploy new tools and technologies to provide more—and more accurate—travel information, solicit feedback on our service and proposed changes, and increase the transparency of agency administration.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Improve access to Metra documents, reports, statistics through website	Post priority documents to website and update regularly
	Evaluate usability of website and reconfigure based on results
	Add dashboard with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to website
Improve public outreach efforts for capital projects and other major initiatives through website and social media	Create and maintain dedicated webpages or social media presence for major projects and initiatives
Receive and respond to customer complaints, compliments, and suggestions	Improve or streamline process for reviewing and acting on customer feedback received from all channels
Build relationships with key stakeholders	Continue and expand outreach to civic organizations
	Increase number of outreach events to elected officials
	Cultivate transit champions in legislature and/or private industry
Increase understanding of access to Metra system	Develop wayfinding policy
	Develop multimodal access policy
Strengthen customer communication efforts during service disruptions	Improve sound quality of announcements on trains and at platforms
Improve outreach and communication with minority and non-English speakers	Develop Limited English Proficiency Plan to establish outreach procedures for individuals who speak languages other than English
	Develop policies related to disparate impacts, disproportionate effects, and any other areas required by Title VI regulations



## MAINTAIN CUSTOMER SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

*Metra is committed to maintaining and improving the safety and security of our system. A successful effort requires the participation of local emergency services partners, our riders, and the public.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Increase customer awareness of security measures and policies	Continue security outreach (including antiterrorism campaigns)
Increase security presence on trains and at stations	Increase police manpower where appropriate Increase security cameras on trains and stations
Increase funding for Metra homeland security and other safety and security programs	Seek additional grant funding
Increase coordination and training with local emergency services personnel	Continue training of municipal police in areas of rail system security and emergency response Continue police and fire symposia for rail safety Work with local jurisdictions to develop and/or update security plans to reflect rail system impacts

## ENSURE FINANCIAL STABILITY

*Since fare revenue generates only a portion of the funds necessary to sustain the system, Metra is dependent on often-unpredictable outside sources for capital funding and operation and maintenance subsidies. This lack of sufficient, dependable funding has many negative consequences. Metra will pursue a number of strategies to diversify funding sources, cut costs, increase revenue, and build a solid financial foundation.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Maintain existing funding and/or increase share of income from formula funds and grants, including working to increase/broaden funding streams	Submit projects for competitive grant applications
	Increase Capital Program funding
	Reduce unfunded 10-year capital funding need
	Continue outreach to elected officials
	Evaluate feasibility of major capital campaign
Increase income from fare and non-fare revenue streams	Identify sponsorship partners and expand naming rights offerings beyond existing opportunities
	Identify existing assets to determine any additional cash streams that can be derived
	Identify and increase self sufficiency of certain assets
Ensure that fare revenues keep pace with external cost factors	Aggressively negotiate contractual agreements to control costs (fuel, insurance, etc.)
	Consider regular fare adjustments that ensure a balanced budget, keep pace with inflation, and avoid significant, infrequent fare increases
Effect positive change through legislative and policy actions at State and Federal levels	Collaborate with regional partners to increase transportation funding in Northeast Illinois
	Collaborate with regional partners to effect positive change in transportation and related policies



## ACHIEVE STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

*State of Good Repair is achieved when infrastructure components (track, signals, bridges, buildings, etc.) across the system are properly maintained, rehabilitated as needed, and replaced when they exceed their useful lives. State of Good Repair is critical to ensuring on-time performance and controlling operating expenses. Metra's capital maintenance needs total \$7.4 billion over the next 10 years, while we expect to receive only \$2 billion in federal and state capital funding during this period.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Establish framework to guide implementation of Capital Decision Support Tool (how funding for capital project investments will be prioritized, including balancing of State of Good Repair needs versus enhancements and expansions)	Work with applicable departments, senior management and Board to identify appropriate framework for prioritizing capital decisions
Complete Capital Asset Inventory to inform Capital Decision Support Tool	Complete Capital Asset Inventory
Continue to grow Capital Program to meet infrastructure investment needs	Prioritize capital funding in Program

## STRENGTHEN TIES WITH THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK AND THE COMMUNITIES METRA SERVES

*Metra recognizes that we are part of a regional system, and that we must develop our partnerships with transportation agencies, communities, and other allies in order for Northeast Illinois to realize the full benefits of its transportation investment.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Strengthen Partnerships with RTA, CTA, Pace, and other transportation agencies	Increase access to physical interagency transfer points
	Implement regional fare payment system
	Install interagency transfer signage at pilot locations
	Increase coordinated procurement and bulk purchasing whenever possible
Increase regional planning coordination (w/ RTA, CMAP, CDOT, IDOT, Amtrak/HSR, and communities)	Continue and expand active participation in joint planning efforts and studies
	Recruit regional agency participation in future Metra planning/environmental efforts
	Develop policy regarding duplication of transit service
Increase support of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects	Increase participation (financial or otherwise) in joint development TOD projects
	Develop list of priority TOD investment sites
	Update TOD brochures
	Develop and approve agency TOD policy
Build on successful relationship with host communities to improve communication and flow of information	Develop and approve agency station parking policy
	Continue outreach to Metra station host communities
Collaborate with private, non-profit, and institutional partners to improve amenities and service	Identify markets with the best opportunities for enhanced reverse-commute service, and develop public/private partnerships to support this service
	Aggressively pursue sponsorships, naming rights partnerships
Target marketing programs to increase awareness of Metra service and attract riders	Expand awareness of transit benefit programs
	Identify new market segments
Increase outreach to Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) communities	Develop vendor training program
	Increase pool of small, minority- and women-owned businesses eligible to be certified in program



## ATTRACT AND MAINTAIN A QUALITY WORKFORCE

*To maximize the effectiveness of our team, Metra must invest in its workforce. Metra will work to attract new talent and build the knowledge and skills of every employee.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Promote employee health and well-being	Promote and expand employee engagement activities (such as running teams and pedometer challenges)
	Expand availability of health risk assessments
	Offer annual biometric screenings
	Improve on-site indoor bicycle parking/storage at Metra headquarters to encourage bicycling to work
Increase office safety	Institute safety training program at Metra headquarters
Improve succession planning and knowledge transfer	Develop a replacement strategy for critical positions
	Create development plans for job ladders and lattices (career paths)
Develop leaders from existing workforce	Institute management training pilot program
	Support cross-functional training/job-rotation programs
	Develop coaching and mentoring programs
Identify and attract talented new employees	Expand outreach to universities and technical schools to expand and support STEAM college-student internship program
	Establish a more effective and efficient outreach that will ensure our candidate pool meets the needs of the organization
Update non-contract employee compensation structure and review procedures to ensure fairness, sustainability, and competitiveness	Roll out new performance management program (pay for performance)
Promote diversity in the workplace	Design, implement and monitor internal audit and reporting systems to measure Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program effectiveness
	Collaborate with outreach sources/partners to assist hiring officials with recruiting minority, women and disabled applicants
	Conduct ongoing EEO/Diversity training at all staffing levels
	Increase use of mediation model to resolve internal organizational conflicts
Encourage professional growth of staff	Promote greater awareness of the Tuition Reimbursement Program
	Implement creative training solutions (such as partnerships with external organizations)

## IMPROVE AGENCY-WIDE EFFICIENCY

*Part of fulfilling Metra's fiscal responsibility to taxpayers and riders is a continual effort to identify and implement strategies that will achieve cost savings and improve performance.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Develop and implement improved fare sales and collection methods	Implementation of regional fare payment system and improved ticket collection / validation
Employee innovation incentive program	Develop and implement program
Technology improvements at corporate and field offices	Implement Technology Capital Program
Implement administrative improvement program	Develop electronic archive system
	Update Operations Profiles (track charts)
Implement modern accounting, tracking, and data collection systems	Enterprise Resource Planning implementation
	Enhance Revenue Accounting system
	Replace or upgrade Train Operations Performance System (TOPS)
Strengthen relationships with peer commuter rail agencies to develop and implement industry-wide best practices	Maintain/expand participation in American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and peer working groups
	Continue to perform peer research for ongoing and proposed activities
Use data to achieve efficiencies and better serve the needs of current and future customers	Study potential for fare restructuring: off-peak fare, fewer zones, different time duration of tickets/passes
	Examine schedules to see if revisions will better meet customer travel needs/in response to market demand as feasible, (including reverse commute, off-peak/weekend)
	Conduct Boarding/Alighting Counts and Origin-Destination Survey to support business intelligence decisions
	Conduct RTA-funded systemwide Customer Satisfaction Survey every two years to meet internal and federal requirements
	Conduct panel surveys, as necessary, for real time input
	Study parking rates, station closures, station and parking facility ownership and maintenance, fare discount elimination, and fare zone restructuring to develop related policies, as appropriate
	Utilize market research methods to better identify future customers and travel markets



## IMPLEMENT SYSTEM EXPANSION TO MEET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AS RESOURCES ALLOW

*Metra will pursue cost-effective expansion opportunities that support Metra's core business and serve the transportation needs of the region.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Partner with other transit agencies, local communities and private entities to plan and implement system expansion projects	Develop station expansion policy with input from key stakeholders
	Develop infill station development policy with input from key stakeholders
Further develop planning, design and environmental analysis to support decision making on system expansion projects	Complete ongoing Environmental Analysis and planning studies to inform cost benefit analysis and decision making
Conduct cost benefit analyses for all proposed system expansions as part of project prioritization process	Complete analyses and use results to prioritize expansions

## SUPPORT AGENCY AND REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

*Every day, Metra contributes to the environmental health of Northeast Illinois by providing a service that alleviates automobile congestion and improves air quality. But Metra has a responsibility to go further, applying sustainable practices to operations and administrative functions. Many of these strategies were identified in conjunction with CTA, Pace, and RTA, and are part of the Chicago Regional Green Transit Plan released earlier this year.*

OBJECTIVE	IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY
Improve operational efficiencies	Study and pilot more fuel and emissions-efficient locomotives
	Expand implementation of LED train signals, where feasible
	Conduct study on optimizing electricity consumption of electric commuter rail
	Install energy building management systems and energy management software
	Install energy-efficient lighting and control systems and retrofit lighting fixtures, where applicable
	Improve energy efficiency of elevators and escalators during modernization projects
	Implement power-saving features on computers and other electronics, where applicable
Increase environmental friendliness of Metra operations	Study benefits and costs of potential opportunities for the generation and use of renewable energy or the purchase of renewable energy credits
	Install Auto Engine Start Stop on all locomotives
	Continue compliance with anti-idling laws and policies for revenue and non-revenue fleet
	Pilot exhaust after-treatment technologies on diesel locomotives
	Install water building management systems and improve metering of water usage
	Implement stormwater management initiatives at applicable new and existing sites
	Improve efficiency of vehicle wash systems
	Retrofit water fixtures at applicable facilities when upgrades are made
	Revise design and construction guidelines for transit facilities
	Develop a framework for incorporating sustainability into procurement specifications
	Perform cost and life-cycle analysis to determine whether to expand use of environmentally-friendly materials
	Pilot new rail and road materials with right of way partners where appropriate
Expand use of green cleaning products where appropriate	

Note that some Regional Green Transit Plan initiatives are reflected under other Metra Strategic Plan goals.

# Strategic Priorities for Capital Funding

PRIORITY	EXAMPLE
1 Safety	A significant portion of Metra's regular Capital Program must be devoted to maintaining existing equipment and facilities in safe operating condition.
2 Projects Mandated by Regulation	Positive Train Control has been mandated by Congress to be implemented by 2015, requiring over \$200M of investment to complete.
3 Completion of Ongoing Multi-Year Projects	Metra began implementation of Phase 1 of the UP-N Bridge Project using federal stimulus funds (ARRA) in 2010. These funds only partially complete this project, so additional funding is required to complete the first four-year phase of this multi-phase project.
4 State of Good Repair	A 2010 report by RTA estimated that Metra would need to spend \$7.4B from 2010-2019 (an average of \$740M per year) on capital improvements to bring the system to a State of Good Repair, while only anticipating approximately \$2B in available funding.
5 Service Enhancements	Enhancements may include increased service on existing lines, additional customer amenities, or infill stations.
6 Service Expansions	Expansions may include new lines or extensions of existing lines.



# Near-Term Capital Projects (2013-2017) and Station Projects (2013-2040)

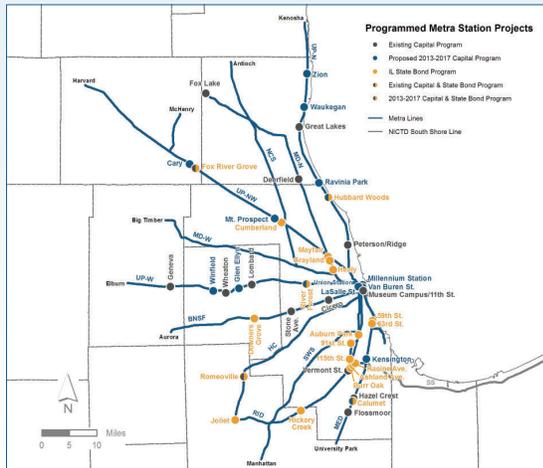
Metra's capital needs exceed the amount of funding available. Metra intends to undertake the following capital projects over the next five years, but most of these areas are not fully funded. Metra will continue to seek to close the \$5 billion gap between our 10-year capital needs and the anticipated funds available.

PROJECT	FUNDING PROGRAM	
	Regular Capital	State Bond
<b>Rolling Stock</b>		
Highliner Replacement		x
Locomotive Improvements	x	
Car Rehabilitation	x	
MU Car Improvements	x	
Fleet Component Overhaul	x	
HVAC Refrigerant Conversion	x	
<b>Signal, Electrical and Communications</b>		
Signal System Upgrades	x	
Interlockings	x	
Electrical System Improvements	x	
Communications Improvements	x	
Positive Train Control	x	x

PROJECT	FUNDING PROGRAM	
	Regular Capital	State Bond
<b>Track and Structure</b>		
Ties and Ballast	x	
Rail	x	
CREATE Program		x
Crossings (Road and Track)	x	
Bridges	x	x
Retaining Wall Rehabilitation	x	
Structural Upgrades	x	
<b>Facilities and Equipment</b>		
Yard Improvements	x	x
Building Improvements	x	
Equipment and Vehicles	x	
Financial Systems Replacement	x	

PROJECT	FUNDING PROGRAM	
	Regular Capital	State Bond
<b>Support Activities</b>		
Homeland Security	x	
Technical Studies	x	
Project Administration	x	
Contingencies	x	
Locally Funded Projects/Match	x	
Unanticipated Capital	x	
<b>Stations and Parking</b>		
Stations and Parking	x	x
Community Initiatives	x	

This map shows new stations and station improvement projects included in Metra's existing and proposed 2013-2017 Capital Program, and identifies the program through which the projects will be funded.



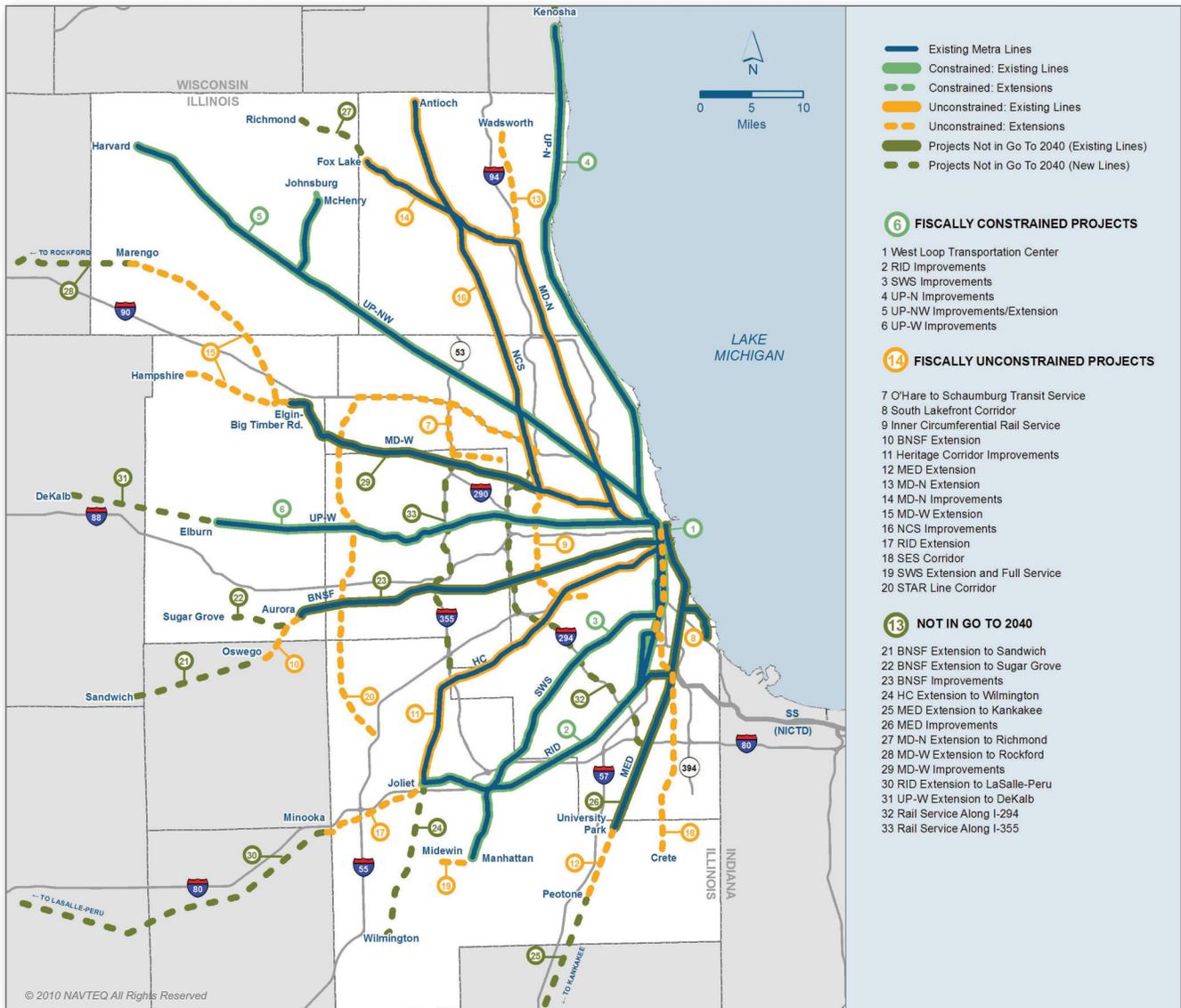
Station projects requested by stakeholders during Metra's strategic planning process are identified below. These projects are outside the scope of Metra's current five-year Capital Program and have not been prioritized.



# Potential Long-Term Projects (2018-2040)

All projects on the map below are outside the scope of Metra's current five-year Capital Program, but these are efforts that Metra will consider when longer term projects are prioritized.

- Projects in the CMAP Go To 2040 Plan's "constrained" list
- Projects in the CMAP Go To 2040 Plan's "unconstrained" list
- Projects not mentioned in the CMAP Go To 2040 Plan that were requested by stakeholders



## Next Steps

- Consolidate input from public outreach meetings and online survey
- Present feedback from public open house meetings to Metra Board of Directors in November 2012
- Incorporate public feedback into the final 2013-2017 Metra Strategic Plan
- Continue to refine and develop performance measures to evaluate progress towards goals and objectives
- Present 2013-2017 Strategic Plan to Metra Board of Directors in February 2013
- Provide regular periodic updates on Strategic Plan progress to the Metra Board and the public, beginning in 2013

*Thank you for attending!*

*Your participation and comments are important to the success of this project.*

*Please submit a feedback form with any comments or questions.*

*Visit the project website at [metrarail.com/strategicplan](http://metrarail.com/strategicplan).*

*Comments will be accepted online from 10/29/12 through 11/12/12*

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